

MEETING MINUTES  
DARIEN ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA) AND  
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (ARB)  
JOINT MEETING APRIL 15, 2009

SPECIAL MEETING

Darien Town Hall - Room 206 – 7:40 to 9:20 PM

ZBA members present: Vic Capellupo, Gary Greene, Al Tibbetts, Jeff Williams,  
John Ashburne, and Polly Davis

ARB members present: Sue Lawrence, Marian Castell, Judy Groppa, Rita  
Gadsden, Cherie Greene, Tim Macdonald, and Alison Hughes

Staff Present: Code Compliance Officer Robert Woodside and Zoning  
Enforcement Officer David Keating

Upon a motion by Vic Capellupo, seconded by Gary Greene, the members voted 13-0 to open the Special Meeting at 7:40PM.

Brief Introductions.

All Board members and staff identified themselves including how long they have served the Town.

Each Board's regulatory authority, powers, duties and general decision criteria/ standards; Community character goals, as defined by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Selectmen in the Town Plan of Conservation and Development; and Zoning Regulation purposes, enforcement, and amendments. Robert Woodside provided several documents for reference and provided a brief overview of the regulatory process involving the ZBA, the ARB, and also the Planning and Zoning Commission.

New "blade" sign provisions.

Dave Keating provided copies of the Planning & Zoning Commission's (P&ZC) recently enacted projecting "blade" sign regulations. He explained these new provisions and answered various questions about them.

Commercial sign applications.

The recent Darien Green signs proposal and decisions, among others, were discussed among the members. It was noted that there are applications like this when there is an overlap of jurisdictions. ARB usually reviews proposals first, primarily considering the aesthetics and appropriateness of the design of the project. Subsequent recommendations are generally identified by the ARB Chair in a letter of "support" for the ZBA (and/or P&ZC) to consider. The ZBA considers the applicable Zoning Regulations, the possible property hardship, and whether the proposal is for the minimum regulation variance necessary.

Commercial building sizes and locations.

The recent Chase Bank proposals and decisions, among others, were discussed. It was noted that the ARB has made an effort to make the commercial areas of Town more pedestrian friendly and it would like an opportunity to provide input into possible Heights Road redevelopments. It was suggested that a joint ARB and P&ZC meeting may be useful. The ZBA has concerns that its decisions may create possible future legal precedent issues. The new Chase bank details are now an ARB concern. Questions were raised as to whether there are ways to address the gaps between the boards and to align the different views. It was suggested that in addition to reviewing project elevation aesthetics, the ARB might also benefit from reviewing application site plans which identify such Zoning limits as setbacks. The P&ZC holds the regulatory authority to modify the regulations provided specific proposed changes are prepared. ZBA staff can keep a list of frequently requested variances (like logo size relative to sign letters) for P&ZC consideration.

Residential request referrals from the ZBA to the Historical Architectural Committee.

It was noted that some valuable referral input has been provided to the ZBA by the Historical Architectural Committee (which includes several members of the ARB). This has provided useful aesthetic input for some of the residential variance applications involving properties and buildings of historical merit.

Upon a motion by Al Tibbetts, seconded by Polly Davis, the members voted 13-0 to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:20 PM.

These Meeting Minutes were reviewed by the attending ZBA members, and upon a motion by Jeff Williams, seconded by Al Tibbetts, approved 5-0 at the ZBA meeting on April 29, 2009. Vic Capellupo, Al Tibbetts, Jeff Williams, John Ashburne, and Polly Davis voted in favor of the motion. Gary Greene also previously indicated his approval.

These Meeting Minutes were also reviewed by the attending ARB members; and upon a motion by Macdonald, seconded by Groppa, were unanimously approved at the ARB meeting on April 21, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Woodside,  
Code Compliance Officer  
ZBA Staff

